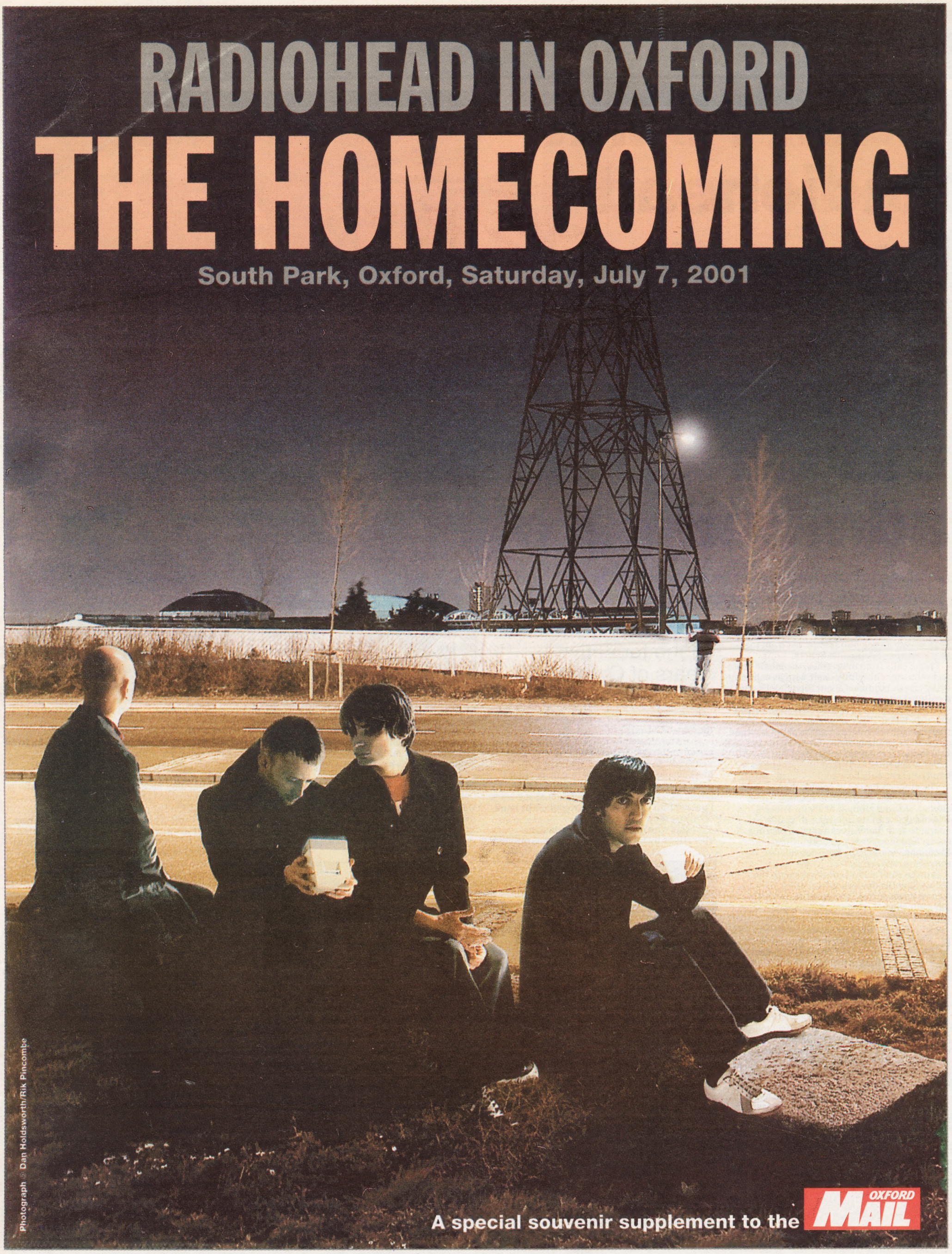
RADIOHEAD IN OXFORD

THE HOMECOMING

South Park, Oxford, Saturday, July 7, 2001



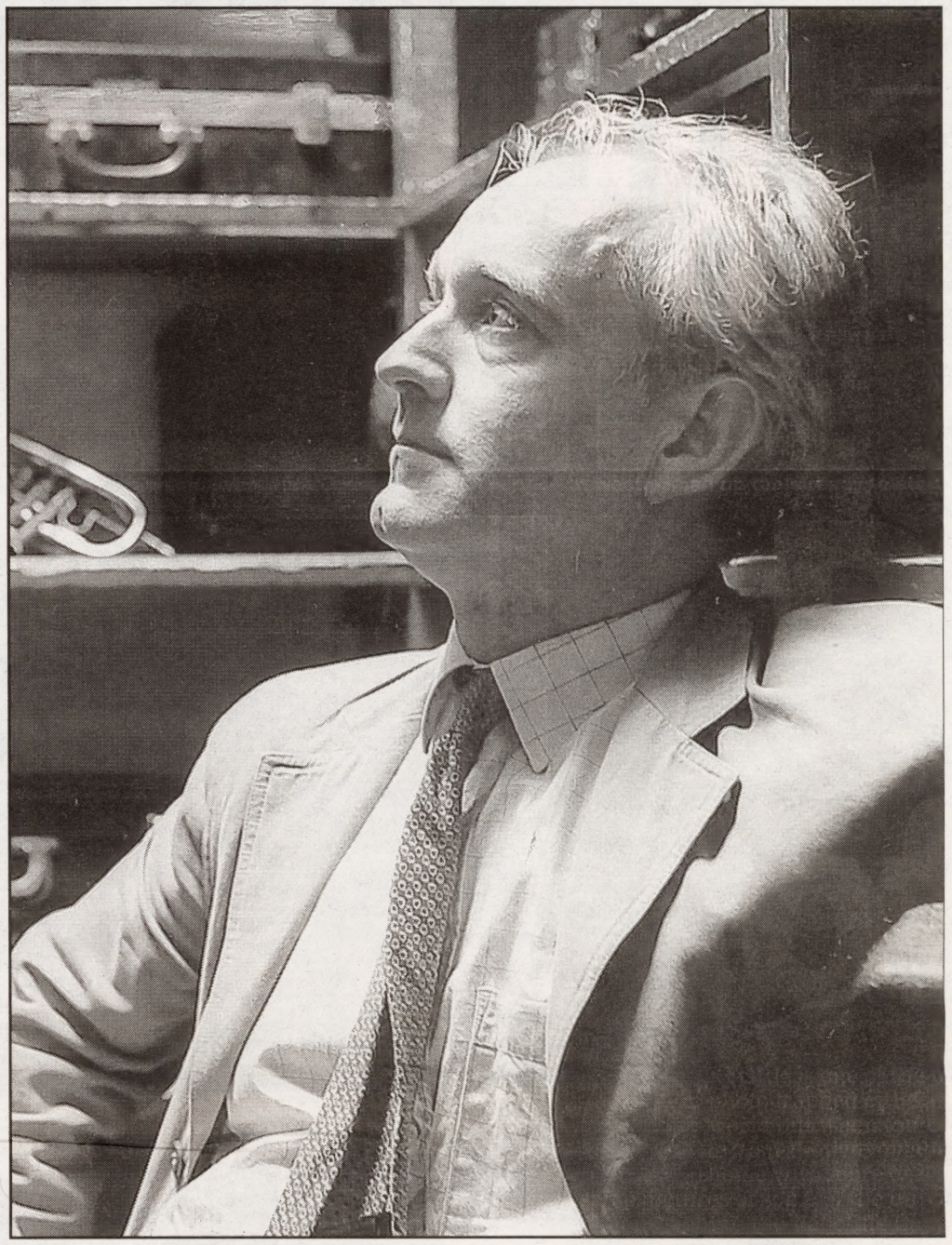
Photograph © Dan Holdsworth/Rik Pincombe

A special souvenir supplement to the OXFORD MAIL

'I don't think Radiohead have any perception of how much they are admired here'

Michael Stinton, director of music at Abingdon School, who taught guitarist Jonny Greenwood

Reg Little looks back at the formative years of Oxford's musical innovators



PROUD: Michael Stinton, director of music at Abingdon School PHOTOGRAPH: Jon Lewis

JUST as surely as the Mississippi Delta gave birth to the blues, one of the world's greatest rock bands emerged from the music rooms of Abingdon School.

Phone calls from magazines, the music press and radio are cheerfully dealt with as each day brings fresh inquiries about the school's part in a cultural phenomenon.

And happily there was no sign of bitterness towards Thom Yorke after the vocalist's less than complimentary utterances about his time at the boys' public school, that have now passed into Radiohead legend.

For a school to be linked to a famous rock band can certainly be a double-edged sword.

The singer's hatred of one teacher is apparent in the song *Bishop's Robes*, which offers a chilling glimpse of Thom Yorke's schooldays, with its reference to children taught to tear themselves apart on playing fields. You fancy that in Yorke's time Flashman, would have been considered something of a softie.

But the band's continued links with the school and the obvious affection felt by their former teachers would seem to tell a vastly different story.

It might be far cooler for a rock band to learn their trade in the brothels of Hamburg or the blues clubs of Chicago, but having a music department head like Michael Stinton to tune into almost certainly helped more than Radiohead fans could have guessed.

Mr Stinton, who is still the school's director of music, taught Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood GCSE and A-Level music from 1987 to 1990. "I taught him over three years and he was a delightful boy, very original, very independent, with a clear idea about where he wanted to go from a young age.

"When he was about 16 he said that he wanted to make it as a rock star. There was no doubt about it in his mind, so much so one did not question it.

"He played viola and guitar. And he was always in a corner strumming an acoustic guitar." The school was even able to offer Jonny jazz guitar lessons, which seem to have been put to good use on Radiohead's most recent work.

"I have an enormous amount of respect for what they have achieved," said Mr Stinton.

"We are very proud of them. I don't think Radiohead have any perception of how much they are admired here.

"I am fascinated by the fact their music is so unconventional and original. It is so esoteric, you might think the music would be outside most people's taste, but it is hugely popular."

Mr Stinton, who often saw Yorke in the music rooms, looked slightly taken aback when I passed him Alex Ogg's biography of the band, detailing their school days.

Yorke, who had to endure five major operations by the time he was six, was quickly given the cruel nickname of Salamander. "It was a very malicious school," he recalls. "Everyone had malicious nicknames, so Salamander was par for the course."

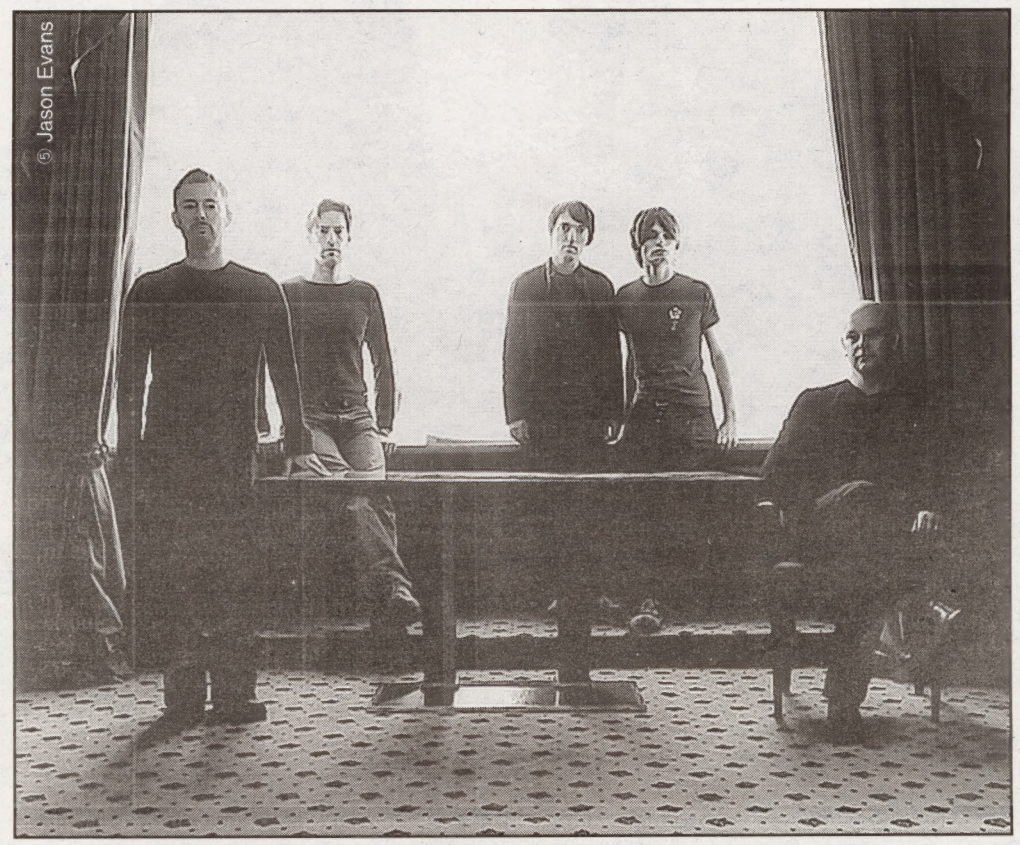
Yorke's comments about school head Michael St John Parker are even more fierce.

But Stinton is surprisingly understanding. "I think a traditional public school head could symbolise everything that a young rock star in the making would rebel against.

"If you put Thom on the spot, I think he would agree that he did benefit from being at a place like this. When he is an old man, I think he will think very differently. I like to think we help foster individuality and creativity here."

Yorke's former art teacher Nigel Hunter, who is now a deputy head at the school, recalls the driving force behind Radiohead as "a pensive thoughtful kind of person."

"Yes, I think Thom was pleased when he was finally on his way, doing his own thing. I think being in any kind of institution is something he would have rebelled against. He never came across to me as being in the least antagonistic. He was private and highly intelligent."



© Jason Evans

Sports editor of *The Oxford Times*, Richard Tilley, who was a contemporary of Yorke and company at Abingdon School, said: "I think the band were products of the system more than they perhaps would like to admit.

"It is not as if we were all groomed to be actors and musicians, but the school does produce much more than its fair share of them.

"If Radiohead had all been to more traditional public schools like Radley College or St Edward's, now that would have been a surprise. But Abingdon School? No.

"Perhaps it was worse for Thom because he was bullied. He was in the year ahead of me, and I can definitely recall him getting called names a lot – one name in particular.

"It was all very cruel. I would have been very bitter about my schooldays if I had got that level of abuse."

It says much that Radiohead bass player Colin Greenwood, when already famous, turned to Abingdon School teacher Tim Dawes when he wanted advice about jazz bass playing.

In return he went back to his old school to take part in a big charity concert at the school's Amey Hall.

Andy Bush, who teaches trumpet at the school, not only played on the new Radiohead album but was responsible for the brass arrangements. After leaving Abingdon School

Yorke went to Exeter University. Bass player Colin headed for Cambridge, working during the holidays behind the counter of Our Price records in the Westgate Centre. His brother Jonny had only just begun a course at Oxford Brookes University when they embarked on their first tour.

But the crucial date was at the Jericho Tavern, in Walton Street, where they were spotted by record company A&R men. Within three weeks, they were signed up by Parlophone, the Beatles' old label.

The pub, since renamed The Philanderer and Firkin, is now visited by fans from across the world anxious to see the pub where Radiohead were discovered with all the fervour of Japanese fans in search of The Cavern.

Yorke has claimed that only inertia has kept him living in Oxford and his relationship with the city seems to be one of love-hate. "Oxford's very polluted. It makes me unwell and it makes my girlfriend very ill. I want to get somewhere else," he was telling people in 1998.

But he has stayed, readily admitting its importance to his song writing. "I've always been able to walk round and round Oxford for days and watch people and be perfectly happy. I used to have favourite places to sit and watch."

The pressure of writing much of the music certainly told on Yorke after the astonishing critical acclaim of *OK Computer*.

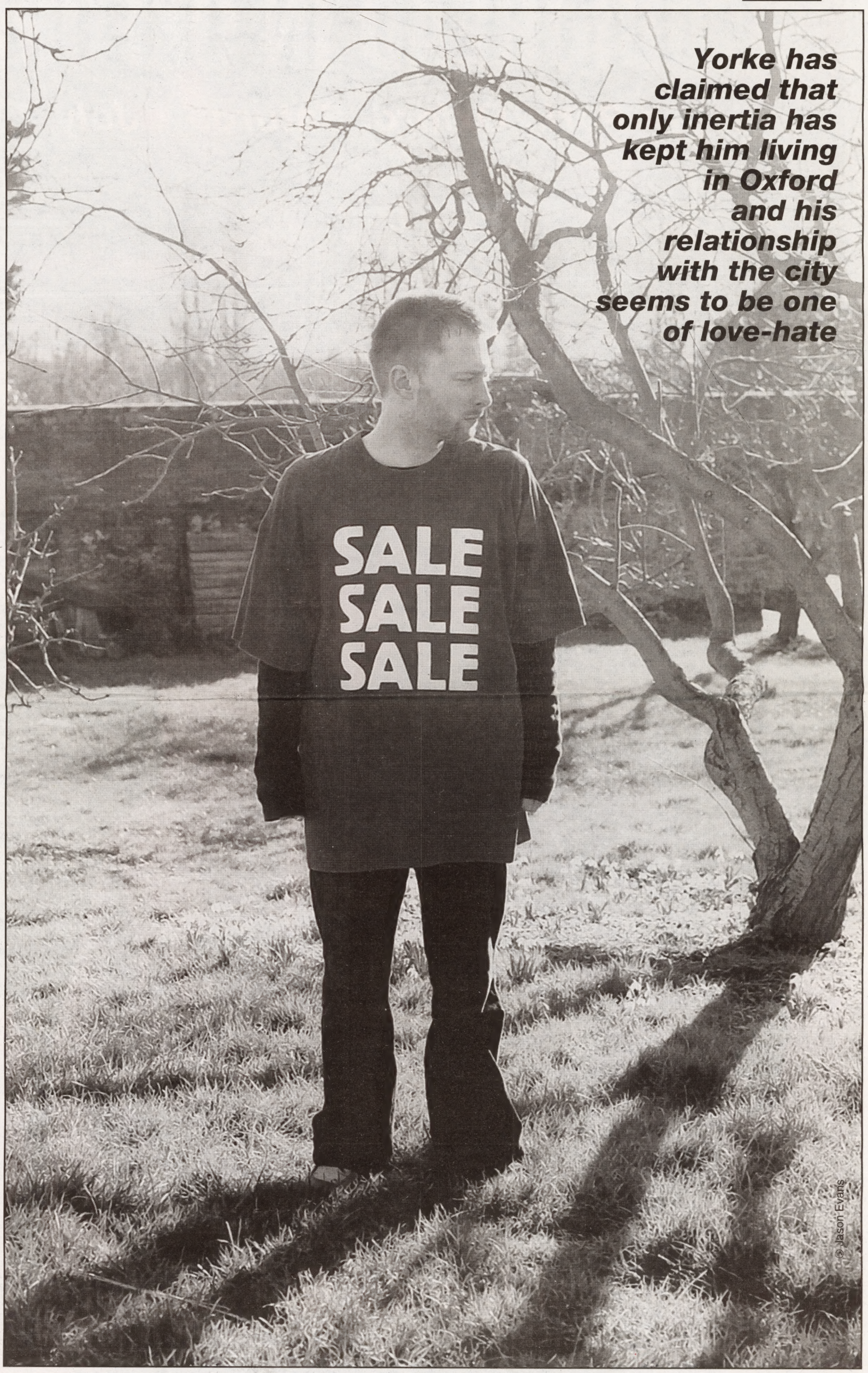
"New Year's Eve 98 was the lowest point of my life," he said. "I felt I was going crazy. Every time I picked up a guitar I just got the horrors. I would start writing a song, stop after 16 bars, hide it away in a drawer, look at it again, tear it up, destroy it. I was sinking down and down."

The making of *Kid A* and its follow-up *Amnesiac* – recorded at the same sessions – was certainly traumatic, with Yorke overcoming writers' block, anguished attempts at recording in Paris, Copenhagen and an old mansion in Gloucestershire and threats of a break-up at the very height of their fame.

The sparse use of guitars, indistinguishable vocals, absence of melody and electronic meanderings suggest this is not an attempt to repeat the formula of past glories.

Even the band's producer Nigel Godrich is said to have feared that Yorke "had lost his marbles" when first presented with the new material. Even if you still think *Revolver* is better than *The Bends*, you certainly have to put Radiohead in the running for the 'Bravest Rock n' Roll Band' in the world title.

Listen carefully to *Kid A* and the involvement of trumpet player Andy Bush means you will certainly hear something of Abingdon School. But then with Radiohead, whether they want you to know it or not, you always did.



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Oxford Mail editor: Jim McClure
Magazines and supplements editor: Catrin Collis
Magazines and supplements deputy editor: Tim Metcalfe
Words: Reg Little, Mark Sargeant, Sarah Edwards, Lorna Stevenson
Photographs: Ed Nix, Antony Moore, Jon Lewis, Dan Holdsworth, Rik Pinkcombe, Jason Evans, John Spinks

RADIOHEAD IN OXFORD – TH

South Park, Oxford, Saturday, July 7, 2001

Rock of Travolta ● Hester Thrale ● Humphrey

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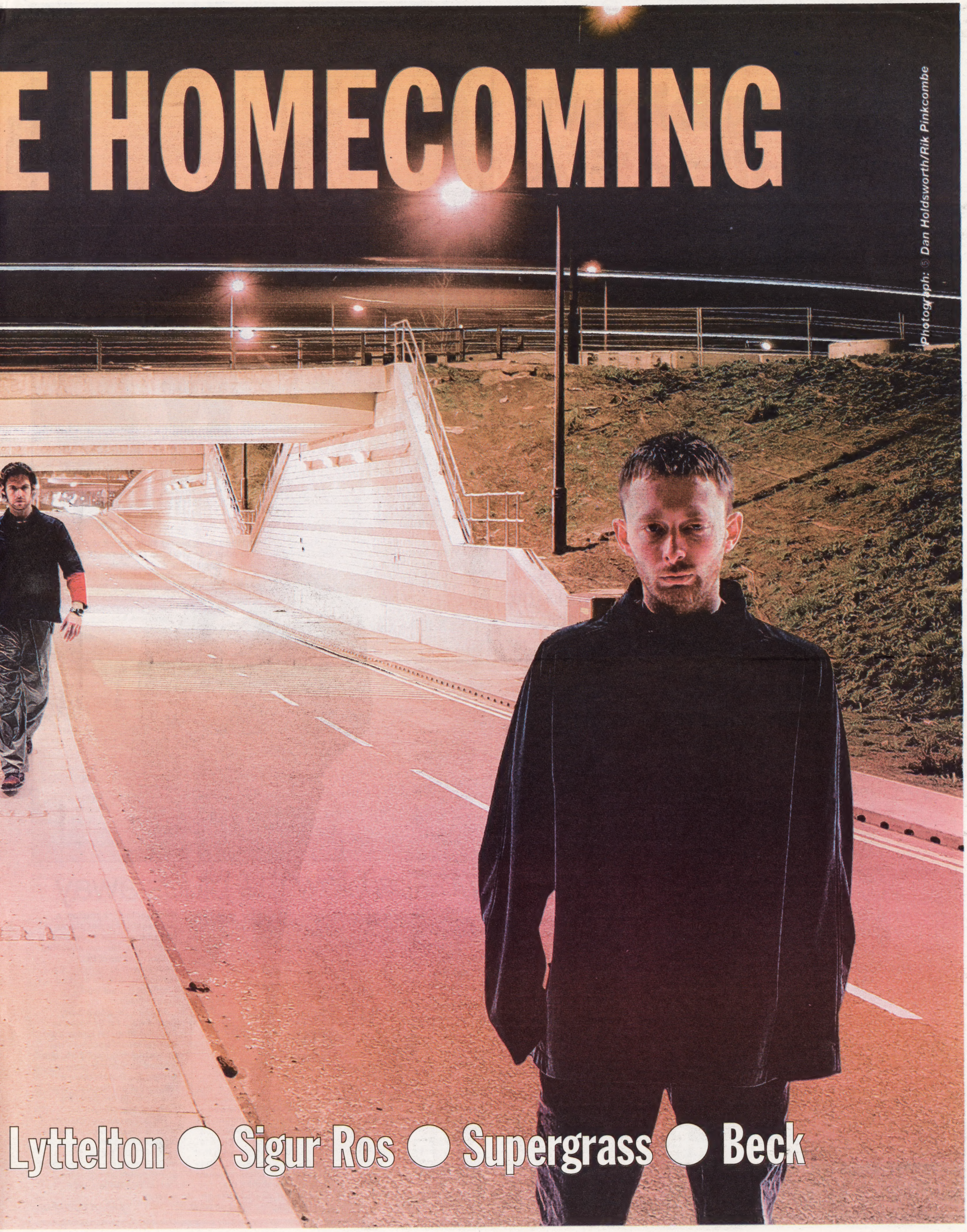
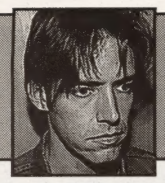


Photograph: © Dan Holdsworth/Rik Pinkcombe

Lyttelton ● Sigur Ros ● Supergrass ● Beck



Having blown the collective minds of Europe, their US tour sold-out in record time

LOOKING down on Matthew Street in Liverpool, just across the road from The Cavern, hangs a sculpture bearing the inscription 'The Four Lads Who Shook The World'.

After all these years, Liverpool is still associated in millions of minds with The Beatles, and three decades after they split, the Fab Four remain the port's greatest tourist attraction.

On the day of the big gig, it's tempting to wonder whether we should be thinking about erecting a similar monument somewhere in Jericho.

There was a time when the title of 'Greatest English Rock 'n' Roll Band in the World' was a fiercely contested affair, with the likes of The Who, the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin battling it out.

Not these days. The band at the top of the tree is without doubt a bunch of ex-public school boys, who took their first tentative steps to world conquest at the Clifton Hampden Village Hall, the Jericho Tavern and clubs along the Cowley Road.

Any list of all-time great albums now features Radiohead in the top five. In a recent survey involving 200,000 voters, the Oxfordshire band were the only act to hold any of the top five spots apart from the Beatles. The band's latest

Radiohead may be one of the biggest bands in the world, but they shun the rock 'n' roll lifestyle

offering, *Amnesiac*, entered the charts at number one in eight countries – the UK, Ireland, Canada, Japan, Finland, Austria, Iceland and Norway.

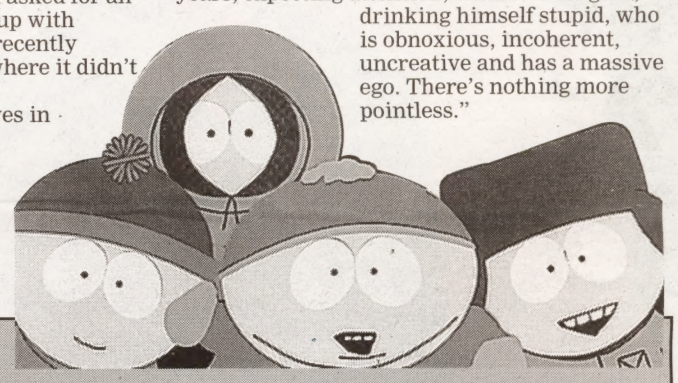
Having blown the collective minds of Europe with their unique live experience, their US tour sold-out in record time. In Japan, Tokyo's legendary Budokan sold out in ten minutes.

And yet these rock demi-Gods, who outsell everyone from Manic Street Preachers to Moby, continue to happily go on living in Oxford, free to walk around their home town without attracting as much as a second glance. No mobbing, no screaming fans, no paparazzi, even some of their fans would not bet on recognising them. But it is no happy accident that they never figure in the celebrity circus.

Few millionaire bands have done more to avoid the limelight than Radiohead. Singer Thom Yorke in particular can come across like Van Morrison with a bellyache if asked for an autograph in the street. "I'm fed up with seeing my face everywhere," he recently complained. "It got to the point where it didn't feel like I owned it."

Drummer Phil Selway, who lives in Botley, did not even allow his success to interrupt his voluntary work with The Samaritans.

Yorke dismisses the whole rock n' roll lifestyle with contempt. "There's really nothing more boring than a rock n' roll star, someone who has been on the road for ten years, expecting attention, wherever he goes, drinking himself stupid, who is obnoxious, incoherent, uncreative and has a massive ego. There's nothing more pointless."



RADIOHEAD'S starring role is to extend to another South Park on the other side of the Atlantic in a few days time.

The next stage of the band's conquest of the United States is a guest appearance in the cult cartoon *South Park*.

The Oxford band will appear in an episode entitled *Scott Tenorman Must Die*.

US *South Park* fans, blissfully unaware of the lovely tie-in with Radiohead's charity gig in Oxford, can see the group immortalised in the controversial cartoon when it is screened on Cartoon Network on July 11.

The episode revolves around eight-year-old Cartman and his quest to impress his friends. *South Park*, the creation of Matt Stone and Trey Parker, has caused uproar in both America and the UK, mainly because of the prolific swearing by the characters.

It turns out that Stone is a big Radiohead fan. When he ran into the band at an awards bash and heard about the Oxford show he offered to design special t-shirts.

ALBUM TRACKING

PABLO HONEY ***(22 February, 1993)*** – CD/tape/vinyl.
You/ Creep/How Do You?/Stop Whispering/Thinking About You/Anyone Can Play Guitar/Ripcord/Vegetable/Prove Yourself/ I Can't/Lurgee/Blow Out

THE BENDS ***(13 March, 1995)*** – CD/tape/vinyl
Planet Telex/The Bends/High & Dry/Fake Plastic Trees/Bones/(Nice Dream)/Just/My Iron Lung/Bulletproof . . . i wish i was/Black Star/Sulk/Street Spirit (fade out)

OK COMPUTER ***(16 June, 1997)*** – CD/MD/tape/double LP vinyl
Airbag/Paranoid Android/Subterranean Homesick Alien/ Exit Music (for a film)/Let Down/Karma Police/Fitter Happier/Electioneering/Climbing Up The Walls/No Surprises/Lucky/The Tourist

KID A ***(2 October, 2000)*** – CD/MD/tape/vinyl
Everything In Its Right Place/Kid A/The National Anthem/How To Disappear Completely (and not be found)/Treefingers/ Optimistic/In Limbo/Idioteque/Morning Bell/Motion Picture Soundtrack, plus hidden track

AMNESIAC ***(4 June, 2001)*** – CD/ltd ed CD/tape/Double LP vinyl
Packt Like Sardines in a Crushed Tin Box/Pyramid Song/Pulk Pull Revolving Doors/You and Whose Army?/I Might Be Wrong/Knives Out/The Morning Bell Amnesiac/Dollars & Cents/Hunting Bears/Like Spinning Plates/Life in a Glass House

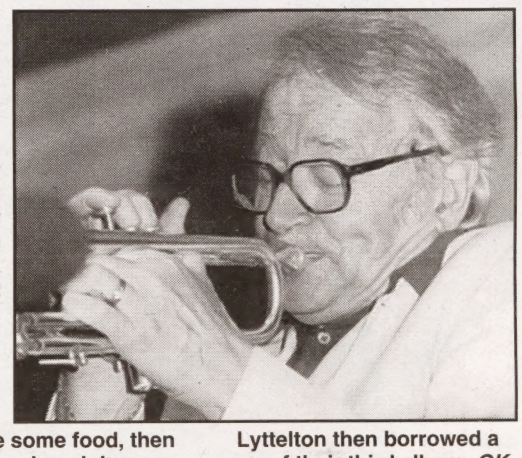
Humphrey helps blow the blues away

VETERAN jazz star Humphrey Lyttelton joined Radiohead earlier this year for a seven-hour session during the recording of their latest aibum *Amnesiac* and will play with the band and perform his own set at South Park today.

The legendary trumpeter, 79, went into the studio with the band in February after they wrote to him asking for help as they were "a bit stuck".

He said: "People had said to me they were all crazy, but in fact we had a good time."

Humphrey Lyttelton, who presents BBC Radio 2's *Best Of Jazz* and Radio 4's *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*, said that the session, for the experimental track *Living In a Glass House*, left him exhausted. "When we finally got a take that sounded good to me, they said: 'Good, we'll go and have some food, then we'll come back and do some more. I said: 'not me'. It was a very heavy day."



LEGEND: Humphrey Lyttelton will play at South Park tonight

Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood had written to Lyttelton saying: "It's probably an awful cheek and we're sure you're very busy, but we're a bit stuck."

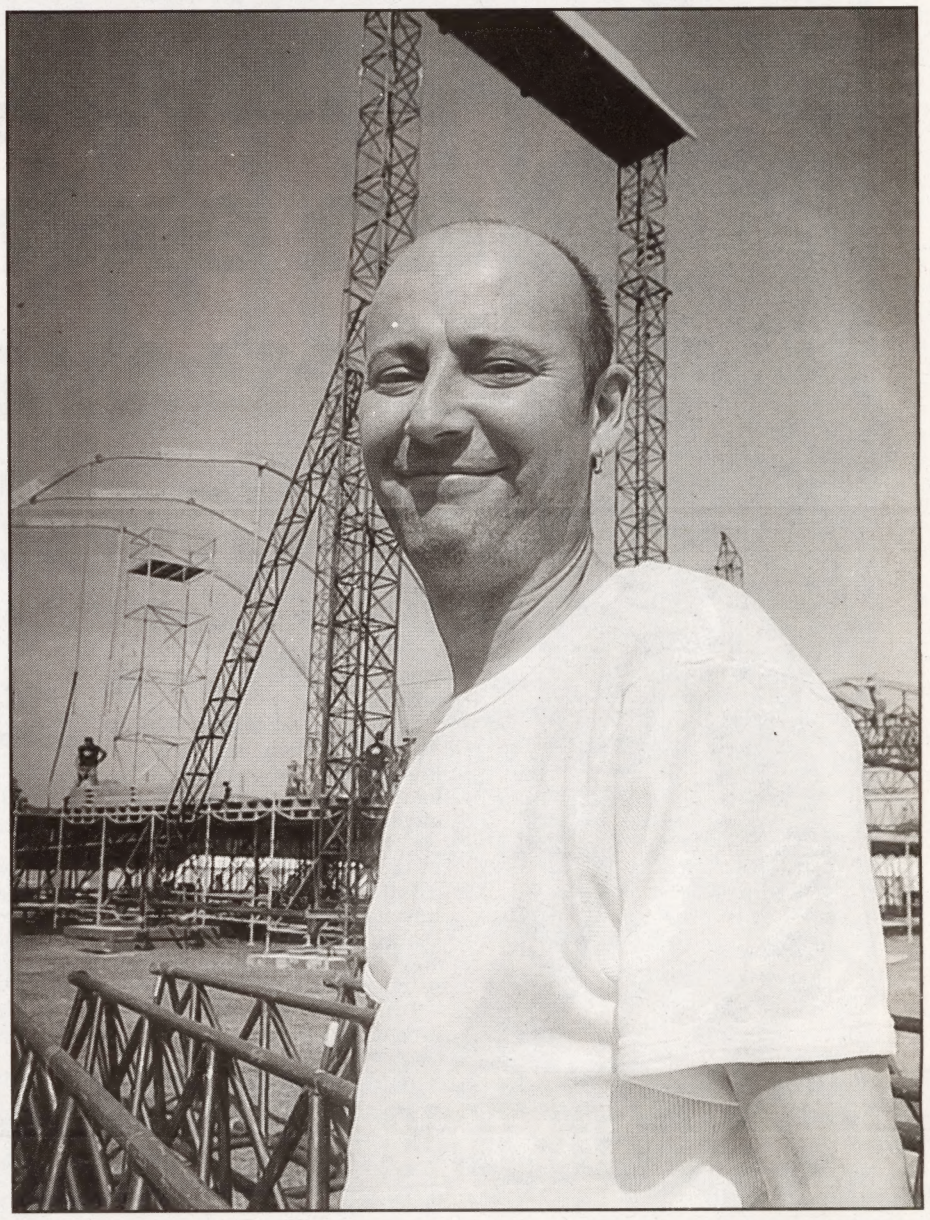
Lyttelton then borrowed a copy of their third album, *OK Computer*, and assembled a group of five jazz musicians to go into the studio with the band. Lyttelton added: "They went through a few nervous breakdowns during the course of it all, just through trying to explain to us all what they wanted." Lyttelton, a self-taught trumpet player, is one of the father figures of British jazz. He was educated at Eton and went to Camberwell Art School. On leaving school, he worked briefly at a steel works in south Wales.

In 1993, he won a Sony Gold Award for Services to Broadcasting. He has written several music books as well as his autobiography. He has worked as a music reviewer, written for *Punch*, been a cartoonist on *The Daily Mail* and a restaurant critic for *Harpers and Queen*.

He is a great-grandfather and his favourite pastimes are bird watching and calligraphy. In April 2000, he was honoured with a lifetime achievement award at the Post Office British Jazz Awards.

SARAH EDWARDS

Radiohead on stage, with the dreaming spires forming a magical backdrop, I could see it all



IMAGINE: Zodiac boss Nick Moorbath PHOTOGRAPH: Ed Nix

Reg Little talks to Nick Moorbath, the man who made a dream come true

AS rock n roll dreams go, it could hardly have had a sweeter, more innocent start. Nick Moorbath was taking one of his regular walks in South Park with his three year-old daughter Mae, to clear his mind of the hassles that come with running one of Oxford's busiest clubs.

He took in the wonderful view of the Oxford skyline as he always did, but instead of watching his toddler racing around he began imagining five of his friends playing there.

"I stood here and I could see it," said Nick. "The park a sea of people, Radiohead on stage, with the dreaming spires forming a magical backdrop to what would be the biggest live music event in the city's history."

I could see it too and more clearly by the minute. For as he sat on the grass in South Park explaining just how his idea of bringing Radiohead home took root, a small town was taking shape on the other side of the park.

A mile of metal fencing had already been erected, 200 toilets delivered with the skeleton of the giant stage in place.

Behind you could see the portable buildings that would serve as dressing rooms for the musicians who will be entertaining 44,000 people at this year's most eagerly awaited outdoor concert.

It is exactly five years since Radiohead last played Oxford, when they performed in front of 400 people at the Zodiac Club, the Cowley Road venue that they helped Nick to create.

Today they will return from the US leg of their world tour to reward the loyalty of local fans, who have followed them from the Jericho Tavern to the heights of 1998, when just about every poll going rated them the 'Best Band in the World', as well as the creators of the Best Album of All Time (*OK Computer*).

Even their challenging new album, *Amnesiac*, had little difficulty topping the album charts in eight countries on its release.

The tickets for the concert sold out in a matter of five days, and Nick takes particular pleasure that a third of the audience will be from Oxford, who can enjoy the show happy in the knowledge that the gig will raise thousands of pounds for local charities.

If anyone was going to persuade Radiohead to add a home-town charity date to their world tour it was going to be Nick.

The son of the eminent Oxford University geologist, Prof Stephen Moorbath, Nick became a key figure in Oxford's thriving music scene when he opened the Zodiac Club in 1995, with entrepreneur Adrian Hicks.

Both Radiohead and Supergrass – another group who have helped put Oxford firmly on the world music map who will also be playing in the Park – were both shareholders in the club. And crucial to the whole venture's success is the fact that as a former keyboard player with the now defunct Oxford band Ride (one of whose members now plays bass for Oasis), Nick was that rarest of things – a businessman trusted and liked by musicians.

The Zodiac Club will be hosting a private post-gig celebration tonight. But to ensure club regulars do not miss out on their weekend fun, the Zodiac is to host a special party night at the Helena Kennedy Centre, at Oxford Brookes University on the Headington Hill Campus.

When plans for the city's Millennium festival OOMF were launched, the organisers signed him up as a director. And the sight of a vast crowd packed into South Park a year ago for a stunning festival finale, reinforced his belief that he was the man to create something even bigger.

"Everyone was just so pleased with the way OOMF went. It was fantastic," Nick said. "The big difference between last year and this show is that OOMF was a free event. This isn't. But through my work with OOMF and the Zodiac, I have worked closely with the police and the city's environmental health people. When I contacted them about the idea of the concert they were very positive."

When Nick, 36, put the idea to Radiohead, the band expressed immediate enthusiasm, putting him in touch with their concert promoters SJM.

In recent weeks the band may have performed in a Spanish bull ring and a Roman amphitheatre, but bass player Colin Greenwood, was still able to tell the music magazine *Nightshift*: "I've been pinning my whole summer around it. We've got a big guest list for our mates. We want to make it like Fun In the Parks."

It's a measure of the band's continued interest in the city that not only are they selecting the charities that will benefit, they also carefully selected the local bands to join Supergrass, Beck and Humphrey Lyttelton on the bill.

Nick began with 120 demo tapes sent in by local musicians, sending on a shortlist of 30 to Radiohead, who finally came up with Rock of Travolta and Hester Thrale.

Oxford City Council has good cause to be fans of the band. The concert is expected to bring more than £25,000 into the hard-up local authority's coffers, mainly from the hire of the park. With 70 construction workers building the set, 250 bar staff and 300 security staff, and practically every spare bed in the city booked-up weeks ago, it has also given the local economy a boost.

Organisers were surprised to receive requests from people in East Oxford, threatening to complain unless they were given free tickets. Nick, however, embarked on his own charm offensive on locals with genuine concerns, even visiting a residential home for the elderly just across the road from South Park. "I was there for an hour talking to one old lady about the history of Cowley Road. She hadn't heard of Radiohead. She wanted to know if they play minuets and madrigals."

He refrained from telling her that Radiohead have given up on tunes at least on *Kid A* and *Amnesiac*. Still there's always Humphrey Lyttelton.

How things began

BACK in 1995 a fresh-faced journalist from our sister paper *The Oxford Times* predicted big things for Radiohead. She was dead right. Here's what Fiona Bond wrote . . .

Oxford's five local heroes take on the Universe

5 MAY 1995

Street Spirits

'I liked *Pablo Honey* when it came out — in fact, I love it. Five innocents doing what they love most. Now they've grown up and are out to prove that they can rule the universe.

The moment Radiohead's recent second album *The Bends*, hit my tape deck, I was hooked and it hasn't left it since. I'm a Radiohead addict. *Planet Telex* with its haunting keyboards, introduces us to the world of the band. Thom's defeatist attitude rears its ugly head with the words like 'You can force it but it will stay stung'. The title track is another song of self-loathing (will the *Creep* Stigma ever disappear?) as Thom Yorke wails 'Am I really sinking this low?' The best track has to be *High And Dry*, a final plea to be saved, a song to cry and die to.

The empty feeling of loss of *Fake Plastic Trees* gives Thom a chance to show how well he really can sing and Jonny Greenwood the chance to leave us spellbound with his eerie keyboard effects. Did you know that the video for his song cost more to make than the whole album? One for you fact-fans out there.

This leads me to *Bones*, which ends up giving us a personal insight into Thom's inability to move after the *Pablo Honey* tour: 'prozac painkillers' says it all.

More highlights of the album are *Just*, with *that* note so high your dog will howl the rest of the night, and *My Iron Lung* with the Jimi Hendrix chorus and cutting sarcasm "We are grateful for our iron lung'.

They end with the mysterious beauty of *Street Spirit* which leaves us feeling so lost that we have to listen to the whole lot all over again.

If you have any sense (and money of course) then you should speed to your local record store and grab yourself a copy, you won't regret it.

This album is going to shoot Radiohead to stardom of galactic proportions and they deserve it all.

Addicted yet?'

'Playing in Oxford has an extra poignancy. You want it to be something special'

Phil Selway of Radiohead

Mark Sargeant talks to Radiohead's drummer Phil Selway about tonight's home town show

THE biggest single musical event in the history of Oxford takes place today at South Park when local heroes Radiohead – now one of the biggest bands in the world – return to the city for a spectacular home town gig, the band's only UK show this year.

But while Radiohead are truly an international act, they all reside in Oxford (some of the time at least), and still regard themselves very much as an Oxford band.

Drummer Phil Selway said: "It's kind of the ultimate dream. Put it this way – when I was a teenager the idea of even having stuff like Oxstock and Party in the Park would have been unthinkable.

"A lot of things have had to happen to get us to the point where we can do the sort of show we are doing in South Park."

"It's always odd playing around Oxford, at The Apollo, The Old Gaol Abingdon, and certainly South Park. They're all places you've been to, they all have so many associations.

"I remember going to The Apollo as a kid to see pantomimes and shows, then we played there."

Television appearances excepted, noteably the Later session for BBC2, South Park is Radiohead's first UK performance since the *Kid A* Big Top Tour.

"That was great, we loved taking the tent out. Hopefully it's something we can do in the future," Phil said.

"The first night was slightly overwhelming. It was great taking the whole show out. By the end of *OK Computer* we'd become jaded by the whole classic process of single-album-tour. We'd been doing it for about seven years.

"Touring should be very enjoyable, an amazing way of life as well. By the time of the Big Top tour we felt we were in a position to make it work in a way we were comfortable with.

"You can go into arenas, which we did with *OK Computer*, or you can try and put something together yourself. The tent allowed us to play to 10,000 people, yet still made it feel intimate."

Once the South Park show was announced, there was lots of speculation as to which local bands would be appearing on the bill.

"The idea was always to open with a couple of local bands and to finish with a couple of local bands, with a few surprises in between," Phil joked. "What with making albums and having children, I've only seen a few new Oxford bands recently. The Rock of Travolta – that's almost the sum total of me going out."

"So much has come out of Oxford musically. When we were first working towards getting signed, the fact that Ride had got a contract, they were this nationally recognised band with front covers of *NME, Melody Maker* and stuff like that, you felt as an Oxford band you could actually go on and achieve something.

The Jericho Tavern was very instrumental for Ride, Supergrass, us and The Candyskins as well — The Candyskins were the only true pop stars Oxford has ever had. Excellent. They always had really good songs, they had all the singles there, they should have been huge."

A generous accolade from a member of a band which long ago outgrew the confines of the dreaming spires. But today Phil returns to his home town – and makes at least one of his dreams come true.

"Playing in Oxford has an extra poignancy," he said. "You kind of want it to be your dream performance really. You want it to be something special."

THE SUPPORTING CAST

With all eyes and ears on South Park, the spotlight falls on the local bands selected to support Radiohead tonight

Supergrass 'arrived' on the UK music scene in 1995, young, carefree and seemingly touched with an effortless pop magic

Their first two albums, *I Should Coco* and the 1997 follow-up, *In It For The Money*, both achieved UK platinum status clocking up impressive worldwide sales of over one million copies each.

The origins of the group go back to the days when a barely-teenage Danny Goffey (drums) and Gaz Coombes (vocals/guitars) put together a band called The Jennifers while both were studying at Wheatley Park Comprehensive in Oxford (bassist Mick Quinn had also been a pupil there).

The Jennifers signed to Nude Records (at the same time as Suede), but only released one single – now a collector's item.

Soon after The Jennifers split, Gaz met Mick whilst working at a local Harvester restaurant and, together with Danny, formed Theodore Supergrass – thankfully they quickly shortened the name.

Supergrass played their first live shows to a herd of cows next to Mick's house – good experience to help them deal with the Oxford audience tonight!

The Rock of Travolta are unfazed about the size of the South Park audience. "We play better in front of large crowds," TROT's Phil Travolta said.

Band members: Darth, Dave, Deadly, Jon, Pat, Phil and Ross Travolta. (Pat is standing in for Joey who is off 'doing' Australia)

Name origin?: After the first suggestion 'Mineral' for the rock group was derided, Phill's alternative of 'Rock of Gibraltar' was misheard – and that was that!

Music style?: Mogwai meets AC/DC. On the album listen out for monks, whom they recorded in a barn near Steventon, just around the corner from the Truck Festival.

Fave venue in Oxford?: Couldn't decide really between The Point, The Club That Cannot Be Named at The Wheatsheaf and the Zodiac (catch them on August 11)

Fave Radiohead lyric/comment?: "This is difficult when your own band is purely instrumental but 'When I am king, you will be first against the wall'. I like the fact they don't give a monkey's about what people are thinking about them and go ahead with what they want and get away with it," said Phil.

Fave own song?: Giant Robo

One word to sum up Travolta?: RAWK!!!!!

Best thing to happen to them last week: Not going to Hull due to van losing brakes on the motorway!

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS: Rock of Travolta 2.15pm ● Hester Thrale 3.05pm ● Humphrey Lyttelton 3.55pm ● Sigur Ros 4.45pm ● Supergrass 5.55pm ● Beck 7.15pm ● Radiohead 8.30pm

ALSO APPEARING:
Minimalist Icelandic band Sigur Ros, jazz legend Humphrey Lyttelton, and special guest, the quirky American indie star Beck Hanson

Hester Thrale, who open the show, have been hidden away rehearsing and are now ready to come "blinking out into the light".

Band Members?: Henry, Marcus, Owen, Tom.

Name origin?: "A name discovered in a book which we just liked the sound of." Only later did they found out Hester was a woman who figured on the 18th-century scene.

Musical style?: "Well, I'd rather not describe it. We do imaginative stuff with the instruments we've got I s'pose."

Fave venue in Oxford?: The Point. "Our first ever gig. We were excited about playing with this other group who were supposed Top 40 contenders, then we walked in to a smell of stale fags and beer on the floor."

Fave Radiohead lyric/comment?: Stunned silence. "Can I get back to you on that . . ."

Fave own song?: "Difficult to decide at the moment as we're too excited about all the new stuff that we've been working on – probably *Old Ship* with which we will open the set on Saturday."

One word to sum up Hester Thrale?: "We take ourselves seriously, but don't want to come over as a po-faced. Imaginative and meaningful, we hope our music is that – that it's adventurous and music which moves people."

Best thing to happen to them last week: "Dunno . . . feels like we're in a timewarp."